

God bless. Thank you all for coming. Thank you all.

NOTE: The President spoke at 2:50 p.m. at the Westlake Recreation Center. In his remarks, he referred to Gen. Tommy R. Franks, USA, (Ret.), former combatant commander, U.S. Central Command; former Senator Bob Dole; Mayor Jerry N. Hruby of Brecksville, OH; and Baseball Hall of Fame pitcher Bob Feller.

Remarks in Yardley, Pennsylvania

October 28, 2004

The President. Thank you all for coming. I have had a fabulous day today. What a great way to end it. Thanks for lifting my spirits. It is such an honor to be back in Bucks County.

First, I want to thank Ruth Wright, who's the owner of this beautiful farm. And I want to thank her for enrolling the land in the Conservation Reserve Program, to help preserve the open spaces of Bucks County. What a great citizen. What a fantastic contribution to this beautiful part of the world. Ms. Wright, we are honored that you let us all come here. Some of us will stay over afterwards and help clean up. [Laughter] I, of course, will be going to another State to keep putting the message out.

I'm here to ask for your vote, and I'm here to ask for your help. We're coming down the stretch. There's not many days left. We have a duty in this country to vote, and I'm asking you to get your friends and neighbors to go to the polls. Tell your friends and neighbors that in a free society, all of us have an obligation to participate in our democracy. Make sure our fellow Republicans get the word. Make sure independents get the word. And don't overlook discerning Democrats. They too want what we want, which is a safer America, a stronger America, and a better America.

I am sorry that Laura is not with me this evening.

Audience members. Aw-w-w!

The President. That is generally the reaction. I take it like, "Why didn't you stay home and send her?" [Laughter] What a fabulous woman she is. You know, when I asked her to marry me, she was a public school librarian.

She said, "Fine, I'll marry you, but make me a promise." I said, "What is the promise?" She said, "Promise me I'll never have to give a political speech." [Laughter] I said, "Okay, you got a deal." Fortunately, she didn't hold me to that promise. She was in Florida today giving speeches. When the people see Laura Bush give a speech, they see a strong, compassionate, great First Lady.

I'm proud of my runningmate, Dick Cheney. I do not want to offend anybody here who's follically challenged, but I admit my runningmate does not have the best hairdo in the race. [Laughter] I didn't pick him because of his hairdo. I picked him because of his judgment, his experience. He is getting the job done for the American people.

I'm honored to be introduced by Chad Lewis. No, I know you know him as a fine football player. Michele knows him as a loving dad and a great husband. I know him as a man of character. I'm proud to be standing on stage with Chad, and I want to thank the other Eagles for coming here today. I'm honored you all are here. Congratulations on a great season. Just don't be too tough on the Cowboys. [Laughter]

I want to thank my friend Arlen Specter for being here today. I hope you put him back in for 6 more years. And I enjoy the other Senator from Pennsylvania, a good friend of mine, I know a friend of yours, Rick Santorum.

I'm a little angry at your Congressman. He's leaving. I've enjoyed working with Jim Greenwood. He cares deeply about the people of Pennsylvania and Bucks County. He has done a fine job as a Member of the United States Congress, and I wish him all the best in this new venture. And I urge you to support Mike Fitzpatrick to take his place.

I welcome Melissa Brown here. She too is running for the United States Congress from the Thirteenth Congressional District. I wish Melissa all the best. I want to thank all the other candidates who are here. I appreciate the entertainers who are here.

Most of all, I thank you all for coming. Thanks for putting up the signs. Thanks for making the phone calls. Thanks for working hard to turn out such a big crowd. I want to thank you for what you're going to do. Turn out the vote—no doubt in my mind,

we can carry and will carry Pennsylvania and win a victory on November the 2d.

Audience members. Four more years! Four more years! Four more years!

The President. And one other person I want to recognize, and that's Sam Evans. Sam Evans is 101 years young. He is with us tonight. He is the chairman of the American Foundation of Negro Affairs. I am proud to have his support. Mr. Evans, God bless you, and thanks for coming.

The election comes down to some clear choices for America's families, and that's what I'm here to talk about. The first clear choice is the most important because it concerns the security of your family. All progress on every issue depends on the safety of our citizens. This will be the first election since September the 11th, 2001. Americans will go to the polls in a time of war and ongoing threats. The terrorists who killed thousands of innocent people are still dangerous, and they are determined. The outcome of this election will set the direction of the war on terror. The most solemn duty of the American President is to protect the American people. If America shows uncertainty or weakness in these troubled times, the world will drift toward tragedy. This will not happen on my watch.

Since that terrible morning of September the 11th, 2001, we've fought the terrorists across the Earth, not for pride, not for power but because the lives of our citizens are at stake. Our strategy is clear. We're strengthening the protections of our homeland. The former Governor of Pennsylvania, Tom Ridge, is doing a great job as the Secretary of Homeland Security. We're reforming our intelligence capabilities. We are transforming our military. There will be no draft. The All-Volunteer Army works, and we'll keep it an all-volunteer army. We are relentless. We are determined. We are staying on the offense against these terrorists so we do not have to face them here at home.

And we're making progress. More than three-quarters of Al Qaida's key members and associates have been brought to justice, and the rest of them know we're on their trail. And at the same time, we use all our assets to protect ourselves.

We've got one other asset, and that's our deep belief in liberty and freedom. We believe in the power of liberty to transform societies. I want you to tell your children and grandchildren about the astonishing events that are taking place.

In a short period of time, Afghanistan has gone from a country ruled by barbarians who would not let young girls go to school. And if their mothers didn't toe their line of hatred, they were taken into the public squares and whipped and sometimes executed in a sports stadium. Because we defended ourselves, because we upheld the doctrine that said, "If you harbor a terrorist, you're equally as guilty as the terrorist," millions of people voted in a Presidential election in Afghanistan. And the first voter was a 19-year-old woman. Because of freedom, that society has gone from darkness to light, and America is more secure to have Afghanistan as an ally in the war on terror.

Iraq will hold Presidential elections in January. Think how far that society has come from the days of mass graves and torture chambers, from the days of a brutal dictator, Saddam Hussein. Freedom is on the march. The world is changing because of our deep belief in freedom. We believe everybody wants to be free. Freedom is not America's gift to the world. Freedom is the Almighty God's gift to each man and woman in this world.

A President must lead with consistency and strength. In a war, sometimes your tactics change but not your principles. Americans have seen how I do my job. Even when you might not agree with me, you know what I believe, you know where I stand, and you know where I'm going to lead this country. On good days and on bad days, whether the polls are up or the polls are down, I am determined to protect the American people, and I will always support the men and women who wear our uniform.

I see a sign that says "Moms of Military." I want to thank the families who are here—the families of our military who are here for their sacrifices. I want to thank the veterans who are here for having set such a great example for those who wear the uniform. And I want to assure those who wear the uniform and their loved ones, we will make sure they

have all the resources they need to complete their missions. That's why I went to the United States Congress in September of 2003 and asked the Congress for support—to support our men and women in harm's way. We asked for \$87 billion, and it was necessary. It was important funding.

The bipartisan support for that measure was overwhelming. Republicans and Democrats both understood the need to support our troops in harm's way. It was so strong that only 12 Members of the United States Senate voted against the funding, 2 of whom are my opponent and his runningmate. As you're out gathering up the vote, as you find people who wonder about which candidate can lead, you might remind them of this startling statistic: Four Members of the United States Senate voted to authorize the use of force and voted against providing the funding necessary to support our troops in combat—only 4 out of 100—4 Members of the Senate, 2 of whom are my opponent and his runningmate.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. They asked him why, and you might remember the famous quote of the 2004 campaign, when he said, "I actually did vote for the \$87 billion, right before I voted against it." He's given several explanations since then about that vote. Perhaps the most interesting and telling of all is when he finally said, "Well, the whole matter was a complicated matter." There is nothing complicated about supporting our troops in combat.

Senator Kerry's record on national security has a far deeper problem than election-year flip-flopping. On the largest national security issues of our time, he has been consistently wrong. When Ronald Reagan was confronting the Soviet Union at the height of the cold war, Senator Kerry said that President Reagan's policy of peace through strength was making America less secure. Well, history has shown that Senator Kerry was wrong and President Ronald Reagan was right.

When former President Bush led a coalition against Saddam Hussein in 1991, Senator Kerry voted against the use of force to liberate Kuwait. Well, history has shown that

Senator Kerry was wrong and former President Bush was right.

In 1994, just one year after the first bombing of the World Trade Center, Senator Kerry proposed massive cuts in America's intelligence budget, so massive that even his Massachusetts colleague, Ted Kennedy, opposed them. Well, history has shown that Senator Kerry was wrong and—we've got to be fair—[laughter]—Senator Kennedy was right.

During the last 20 years, in key moments of challenge and decision for America, Senator Kerry has chosen the position of weakness and inaction. With that record, he stands in opposition not just to me but to the great tradition of the Democratic Party. The party of Franklin Roosevelt and Harry Truman and John Kennedy is rightly remembered for confidence and resolve in times of war. Senator Kerry has turned his back on "pay and price" and "bear any burden," and he has replaced those commitments with "wait and see" and "cut and run."

Many Democrats in this country do not recognize their party anymore. And today, here in the great State of Pennsylvania, I want to speak to every one of them: If you believe that America should lead with strength and purpose and confidence in our ideals, I would be honored to have your support, and I am asking for your vote.

Audience members. Four more years! Four more years! Four more years!

The President. The security of our families is at stake. Senator Kerry says that September the 11th did not change him much at all. That's what he said. His policies make that clear. He says the war on terror is primarily a law enforcement and intelligence gathering operation.

September the 11th changed me, and changed my outlook. I'll never forget the day that I stood in the ruins of the Twin Towers, September the 14th, 2001. I'll never forget the sights and sounds of that day, the workers in hardhats yelling at me at the top of their lungs, "Whatever it takes." I remember the firefighter or police officer, I'm not sure which one, who'd come out of the rubble. He grabbed me by the arm. He looked me square in the eye, and he said, "Do not let

me down.” Ever since that morning, I’ve gotten up thinking about how to best protect America. I will never relent in defending our country, whatever it takes.

The second clear choice in this election concerns your family’s budget. When I ran for President 4 years ago, I pledged to lower taxes for American families. I kept my word. We doubled the child credit to \$1,000 per child to help the moms and dads. We reduced the marriage penalty. I believe the Tax Code ought to encourage marriage, not penalize marriage. We dropped the lowest bracket to 10 percent so working families can take—keep more of their paychecks. We reduced income taxes for everybody who pays income taxes. And real after-tax income, the money you have in your pocket, is up by about 10 percent since I’ve been your President.

When you’re out gathering the vote, remind people about what this economy has been through. Six months prior to my arrival in Washington, the stock market was in serious decline. It foretold a recession that we went through. And then we had some corporate scandals. But we acted. We passed good legislation that made it abundantly clear we will not tolerate dishonesty in the boardrooms of America. And then we got attacked, and those attacks cost us about a million jobs in the 3 months after September the 11th.

But our economic policies are working. By stimulating consumption and increasing investment, this economy is strong, and it is getting stronger. Think about what’s taken place. Homeownership is at an alltime high in America. More minority families own a home than ever before in our Nation’s history. Pennsylvania farmers, like farmers everywhere, are making a good living under the Bush administration. Small businesses are flourishing. The entrepreneurial spirit is strong in America.

We’ve added 1.9 million new jobs in the last 13 months. The national unemployment rate is 5.4 percent. Let me put that in perspective for you: That’s lower than the average rate of the 1970s, the 1980s, and the 1990s. The unemployment rate in Pennsylvania is 5.3 percent. This economy is moving forward, and we’re not going to go back to the days of tax and spend.

My opponent has a different plan for your family’s budget. He’s going to take a big chunk out of it. You remind your friends and neighbors about these facts. He voted against the child—increasing the child credit. He voted against the marriage penalty relief. He voted against lower taxes. If he had had his way, the average American family would be paying 2,000 more in Federal income taxes.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. That probably doesn’t seem like a lot to people in Washington. It’s a lot to people who are trying to make ends meet in Bucks County, Pennsylvania. It matters to families right here in this part of the world.

He’s been in the United States Senate 20 years, and he’s voted for higher taxes 98 times. That is five times a year. I would call that a predictable pattern, a leading indicator. When a Senator does something that often, he must really enjoy it. *[Laughter]*

I want you to couple that fact with this one: He’s proposed about \$2.2 trillion in new Federal spending. That’s trillion with a “T.” That’s a lot. That’s a lot even for a Senator from Massachusetts. *[Laughter]* And so they asked him, “How are you going to pay for it?” And he threw out that same old tired line we’ve heard before. He’s going to tax the rich.

Let me tell you two things about that. One, most small businesses are sole proprietorships or Subchapter S’s. They pay tax at the individual income-tax level. Seventy percent of new jobs in America are created by small businesses. By running up the top two brackets, you’re taxing the job creators. You’re taking money out of the coffers of small businesses, and that is bad economic policy.

This may interest you as well. By raising the top two brackets, by taxing the rich, you raise about 600 billion to 800 billion dollars. That is far short of the 2.2 trillion that he had promised. That’s what we call a tax gap. That’s the difference between what’s promised and what’s delivered. Guess who usually fills the tax gap? You do. But the good news is, we’re not going to let him tax you; we’re going to carry Pennsylvania and win on November the 2d.

The third clear choice in this election involves the quality of life for our families. A

good education and quality health care are important to our families. As a candidate, I pledged to challenge the soft bigotry of low expectations by reforming our public schools. I kept my word. I signed the No Child Left Behind Act and proudly so. We're raising the standards. We're spending more money, but in return, we're asking for results. We believe every child can learn, and we expect every school to teach.

You cannot solve a problem until you diagnose the problem, and we're now diagnosing problems and we're solving them. Test scores are up in reading and math. We're closing an achievement gap for minority students all across America. And we're not going to go back to the days of low standards and mediocrity in our classrooms.

We'll continue to improve life for our families by making health care more affordable and available. We'll make it available by making sure the poor and the indigent are able to get care in community health centers, places where people can get good preventative care and good primary care without burdening the emergency rooms of your local hospitals. We'll make sure that children of low-income families are—subscribe to the programs aimed to help them, to make sure health care is affordable.

We'll help our small businesses. Small businesses ought to be allowed to pool risk across jurisdictional boundaries so they can buy insurance at the same discounts that big companies are able to do. We will expand health savings accounts to help our small-business owners and families afford health insurance and manage their own health care plans.

To make sure health care is available and affordable in a State like Pennsylvania and others, we will do something about the frivolous lawsuits that are running up the cost of medicine and running good doctors out of practice. We have a problem in this Nation when it comes to medical liability. There are too many lawsuits. I have met too many ob-gyns from the State of Pennsylvania who are being driven out of practice because their premiums are so high because of the lawsuits. And I, unfortunately, have met too many patients of ob-gyns who are deeply concerned about the quality of health care

for not only the mom but the baby. This is a national problem.

You cannot be pro-doctor and pro-patient and pro-personal-injury-trial-lawyer at the same time. You have to make a choice. My opponent made his choice, and he put a personal-injury trial lawyer on the ticket.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. He's voted against medical liability reform 10 times in the United States Senate. I made my choice. I'm standing with the doctors of Pennsylvania. I'm standing with the patients of Pennsylvania. I am for real medical liability reform.

My opponent proposed a plan. You might remember, at one of our debates, he looked straight in the camera and he said about his plan, "The Government doesn't have anything to do with it." I could barely contain myself. [*Laughter*]

The Government's got a lot to do with it. Eighty percent of the people in this plan will end up on a Government plan. If you make it easier for people to get on Medicaid, it is likely small-business owners will stop providing insurance for their employees because the Government will cover them. That's moving people from the private sector to the public sector when it comes to health care. And when the Government writes the checks, the Government makes the rules. And when the Government starts making the rules for your family's health care, they start making decisions for you. And they make decision for the docs. And they start making decisions on rationing of care.

Countries that have tried centralized health care can't get away from it quick enough. The wrong prescription for American families is to federalize health care in America. In all we do to make sure health care is available and affordable, we will make sure the decisions are made by doctors and patients, not by officials in Washington, DC.

The fourth clear choice in this election involves your retirement. Our Nation has made a solemn commitment to America's seniors on Social Security and Medicare. When I ran for President 4 years ago, I promised to keep that commitment and improve Medicare by adding prescription drug coverage. I kept my word.

We reformed Medicare. The system need to be fixed. We would pay thousands of dollars for a heart surgery but not one dime for the prescription drugs that could prevent the heart surgery from being needed in the first place. And that was not fair to our seniors, and it certainly wasn't fair to the taxpayers. And so we modernized Medicare. I brought Republicans and Democrats together. I proudly signed the Medicare bill. And beginning in 2006, all seniors in America will be able to get prescription drug coverage under Medicare.

We'll keep the promise of Social Security for our seniors, and we'll strengthen Social Security for generations to come. In the 2000 campaign, I remember some of those ads that said, "If George W. gets elected, our seniors won't get their checks." You might remember those. When you're out gathering up the vote, remind people George W. got elected, and the seniors got their checks. Those scare tactics are not going to work in 2004. They're too old, and they're too tired. Seniors will always get their checks. Baby boomers like me, like some of you, are in pretty good shape when it comes to the Social Security trust.

But we need to worry about our children and our grandchildren. We need to worry about whether the Social Security system will be there when they retire, and that's why I think younger workers ought to be allowed to take some of their own payroll taxes and set up a personal savings account, a personal savings account that will earn a better rate of return, a personal savings account they call their own, a personal savings account the Government cannot take away.

My opponent takes a different approach. He said he's going to protect Social Security, but tell your friends and neighbors about this fact: He voted eight times for higher taxes on Social Security benefits.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. And when it comes to the next generation, he has offered no reform. See, the job of a President is to confront problems, not to pass them on to future Presidents and future generations. In a new term, I'll bring people together to strengthen Social Security for generations to come.

The fifth clear choice in this election is on the values that are so crucial to keeping a family strong. I stand for the appointment of Federal judges who know the difference between personal opinion and the strict interpretation of the law. I stand for marriage and family, which are the foundations of our society. I stand for a culture of life in which every person matters and every being counts. And I proudly signed the ban on partial-birth abortion.

My opponent has taken a different position. He voted against the Defense of Marriage Act. He voted against the ban on partial-birth abortion. And at one point in this campaign, he actually said that the heart and soul of America can be found in Hollywood.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. That's what he said. Most Americans do not look to Hollywood as a source of values. The truth of the matter is, the heart and soul of America is found in communities in Bucks County, Pennsylvania.

I'm running for a reason. I see clearly where this country needs to go.

Audience members. Four more years! Four more years! Four more years!

The President. I thank you all. I know where I want to lead us. You know, one of my favorite quotes is from a fellow Texan named Tom Lea, and he said, "Sarah and I live on the east side of the mountain. It is the sunrise side, not the sunset side. It is the side to see the day that is coming, not to see the day that is gone." The course of this campaign, my opponent has spent much of it talking about the day that is gone. I'm talking about the day that's coming.

I'm talking about a day in which our families are able to realize their dreams for their children. I'm talking about a day where prosperity reaches every corner of America, a day in which every school sets high standards so every child can realize the great promise of America. I'm talking about a day when we achieve the peace we all desperately want.

When I campaigned across Pennsylvania 4 years ago, I made this pledge, that I would uphold the honor and the dignity of the office. With your help, I will do so for 4 more years.

God bless. On to victory. Thank you all.

NOTE: The President spoke at 6:25 p.m. at Broadmeadows Farm. In his remarks, he referred to professional football player Chad Lewis and his wife, Michele; Mike Fitzpatrick, candidate for Congress in Pennsylvania's Eighth Congressional District; and former President Saddam Hussein of Iraq.

Statement on Signing the Ronald W. Reagan National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2005

October 28, 2004

Today, I have signed into law H.R. 4200, the "Ronald W. Reagan National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2005." The Act authorizes funding for defense of the United States and its interests abroad, for military construction, and for national security-related energy programs.

Section 326 of the Act, amending sections 3551, 3552, and 3553 of title 31, United States Code, purports to require an executive branch official to file with the Comptroller General a protest of a proposed contract for private sector performance of agency functions previously performed at higher cost by Federal employees, whenever a majority of those Federal employees so requests, unless the official determines, free from any administrative review, that no reasonable basis exists for the protest. The executive branch shall construe section 326 in a manner consistent with the President's constitutional authority to supervise the unitary executive branch, including the making of determinations under section 326.

Section 574 of the Act amends sections 3037, 5046, 5148, and 8037 of title 10, United States Code, to prohibit Department of Defense personnel from interfering with the ability of a military department judge advocate general, and the staff judge advocate to the Commandant of the Marine Corps, to give independent legal advice to the head of a military department or chief of a military service or with the ability of judge advocates assigned to military units to give independent legal advice to unit commanders. The executive branch shall construe section 574 in a manner consistent with: (1) the President's

laws be faithfully executed, to supervise the unitary executive branch, and as Commander in Chief; (2) the statutory grant to the Secretary of Defense of authority, direction, and control over the Department of Defense (10 U.S.C. 113(b)); (3) the exercise of statutory authority by the Attorney General (28 U.S.C. 512 and 513) and the general counsel of the Department of Defense as its chief legal officer (10 U.S.C. 140) to render legal opinions that bind all civilian and military attorneys within the Department of Defense; and (4) the exercise of authority under the statutes (10 U.S.C. 3019, 5019, and 8019) by which the heads of the military departments may prescribe the functions of their respective general counsels.

The executive branch shall construe section 1021, purporting to place restrictions on the use of the U.S. Armed Forces in certain operations, and sections 1092 and 1205, relating to captured personnel and to contractor support personnel, in a manner consistent with the President's constitutional authority as Commander in Chief and to supervise the unitary executive branch.

Section 1203 of the Act creates a Special Inspector General for Iraq Reconstruction, under the joint authority of the Secretaries of State and Defense, as a successor to the Inspector General of the Coalition Provisional Authority under title III of Public Law 108-106. Title III as amended by section 1203 shall be construed in a manner consistent with the President's constitutional authorities to conduct the Nation's foreign affairs, to supervise the unitary executive branch, and as Commander in Chief of the Armed Forces. The Special Inspector General shall refrain from initiating, carrying out, or completing an audit or investigation, or from issuing a subpoena, which requires access to sensitive operation plans, intelligence matters, counter-intelligence matters, ongoing criminal investigations by administrative units of the Department of Defense related to national security, or other matters the disclosure of which would constitute a serious threat to national security. The Secretary of State and the Secretary of Defense jointly may make exceptions to the foregoing direction in the public interest.